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BOOK REVIEWS.

The Life of Stephen A. Douglas. By Wm. Gardner. (The Roxburgh Press, Boston).

Douglas had the misfortune to be on the wrong and losing side of the great slavery struggle that culminated in our civil war. Of the great hero and great antagonist of Douglas—Abraham Lincoln—we have several accounts. It is a regrettable fact that we have been unable, except in very few cases, to tell the story of our greatest American without at the same time attempting to belittle his greatest antagonist.

This is altogether unnecessary in the case of Lincoln, for Lincoln towers above all the men of his time. It is well to remember, however, that Douglas never met his equal or superior in the political struggle of his time till he encountered Lincoln. If then it took the greatest American of the century to master the "Little Giant", it would seem that Douglas' life deserves more than a condemning notice.

Mr. Gardner has added little to our knowledge of Douglas, perhaps there is little more to know, but he is deserving of some credit for collecting this and presenting it in readable form. The book is for popular use as is shown by the total absence of citations and bibliography. The author takes especial pains to picture the times in which Douglas lived and acted. "Only sixty years have passed, but with them has passed away a civilization, with its modes of thought and sentiment, its ethics and its politics. The country had but one-fifth of its present population. A third of our area was still held by Mexico. Wealth was as yet the poet's dream or the philosopher's night-mare. Commerce was a subordinate factor in our civilization. Agriculture was the occupation of the people and the source of wealth. Cotton was king not only in the field of business, but in that of politics. The world still maintained its attitude of patronizing condescension or haughty contempt towards the dubious experiments of "broad and rampant democracy." Dickens had just written his shallow twaddle about Yankee crudeness and folly. Macaulay was soon to tell us that our constitution was "all sail and no anchor." De Tocqueville had but recently published his appreciative estimate of the New World Civilization. . . . "It was a time of egotism, bluster and brag in our relation to the foreign world, and of truckling submission in our home politics to a dominant power, long since so completely whirled away by the

storm of revolution, that it is hard to realize that half a century ago the strongest bowed to its will." (p. 21).

The fever for new territory, for expansion, and for proclaiming our manifest destiny, took hold of every section except New England. "It was not a question of ethics or of sober statesmanship, but one of practical politics that divided the North and the South at this period. Each hoped to secure for itself the alliance and sympathy of the new states thereafter admitted. Each applied itself to the task of shaping the territories and moulding the future states to serve its ulterior views." (p. 31).

But it soon came to be a question of ethics. The moral awakening which was begun and kept going by Garrison and the abolitionists was beginning to bear fruit. The old school of compromisers, Clay, Calhoun and Webster, and their followers, did not realize it in their time, nor did Douglas who survived them, realize it in his. All this is clearly shown by Mr. Gardner. Each new acquisition of territory was viewed as so many possible slavery or anti-slavery states. To keep the balance in the Senate between the two sections was the all important thing long after the numerical majority as represented in the House had decided against further extension of slavery. It is one of the curious features of the times that a scheme of government which prevented the numerical majority from controlling the governmental policy should have met with so few attacks. Few saw so clearly as Garrison that it was the system of government that saved slavery so long, and still fewer had the courage to attack it.

One naturally looks in a biography of Douglas for some clear insight into his motives for repealing the Missouri Compromise as applied to Nebraska, but Mr. Gardner throws no new light on this problem. He seems here to follow Rhodes (Vol. I, Chap.V), almost literally. What value he places upon Douglas' reasons for the repeal as recorded in Cutts, pp. 87-91, (a brief treatise upon Constitutional and Party questions, and the history of Political parties, as received orally from the late Stephen A. Douglas), we cannot know. The time is gone, it seems to us, when we can simply charge it up to an ambition for the presidency and a desire to please the South. Douglas brought in his first bill for the organization of Nebraska in 1844 and renewed it every session till the famous Kansas-Nebraska bill was passed. All during the Oregon agitation he told how Oregon up to 54° 40' might be held for the United States by opening this territory to settlers and allowing others to pass through it and settle Oregon. As early as 1844 he protested to the Secretary of War against settling the Indians in that territory. In 1852-3 a body of emigrants of some 15,000 to 20,000 gathered on the border

of Missouri and threatened to invade Nebraska in spite of the law. Their attitude became so threatening that the president dispatched the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the frontier to head off the invasion, and ordered the commanding officer at Leavenworth to use the army, if necessary, in resisting them. If Douglas has stated the facts, and we do not know that they have been questioned, may he not have been perfectly honest in trying to have the territory opened by leaving the question of slavery to be settled by the people of the territory? Is it not possible in view of the fact that the people of California settled it similarly, and so easily?

The author thinks the administration Democrats "proved a quite unimportant factor" in the campaign against Lincoln in 1858. Certainly, Douglas did not so regard them, and, if the National party machine exercised but a fraction of the power that it wields today, no candidate would consider it unimportant in a close contest. Mr. Gardner does an excellent piece of work in the chapter where he traces the deadly effect of Douglas' answers to Lincoln's questions in the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Especially the answers in the Freeport debate. This is an excellent study in cause and effect. Douglas' attitude toward Lincoln at the inauguration, and immediately after the fall of Sumter, might have been mentioned with good grace. Mr. Gardner's estimate of Douglas is worth quoting at some length.

"He was a practical man of action, whose course was generally guided by the accidental circumstances of the hour, rather than by fixed principles. His education was defective. He entered the great arena with little of either mental or moral culture. Yet, severely as we now judge him, he did not fall below the prevailing standard of political morals. His real sin was that he did not rise above the ethics of the times; that he remained deaf as an adder to the voices of the great reformers who sought to regenerate the age, and who were compelled to grapple with him in deadly struggle before they could gain footing on the stage.

"The time was out of joint and he felt no vocation to set it right. While his ethics has fared hard, his mental gifts have been over-estimated. The availability of all his resources, his overwhelming energy and marvelous efficiency among men of intellect, gave rise to the impression which still survives that he was a man of original genius (p. 236). * * * It is not to be set down in his list of sins that he failed to bridge over the widening chasm between the North and South, but it must be charged to him as a mental defect that he hopelessly failed to comprehend the significance of the great movements which he seemed to lead. That in the keenness of his interests in the evolutions of political strategy he failed to discern the symptoms of coming revolution. When the storm that had been brewing before his

eyes for ten years broke upon the country it took him by surprise. The ardor of his temperament, the eagerness of his ambition, makes his conduct at times painfully resemble that of a selfish demagogue. But the range of his vision was small. He erred less from the corruption of the heart than from deficiency of the mind. But what statesman of note during those strange and portentous years preceding the war could safely expose his speech and conduct to the searchlight of criticism? The wisest walked in darkness and stumbled often. It was not the fate of Douglas to see the mists amid which he groped, swept away by the hurricane of war," (p. 238).

With the author's final conclusion "young as he was, he had outlived his historic era, and there is a dramatic fitness in the ending of his career at this time," we cannot agree.

Perhaps Alexander H. Stephens overstates the matter when he regards the death of Douglas "as one of the greatest calamities, under the dispensation of Providence, which befell the country in the beginning of these troubles." (Vol. II, p. 421), but we are inclined to believe that had Douglas survived the war and wielded any large share of his old influence during the trying days of Reconstruction, many of the blunders of that period would have been avoided and the solid South of today would be less of a dreadful reality.

A somewhat careless use of pronouns and a number of obvious typographical errors mar the book, but taking it all in all it deserves a wide and careful reading.

EDWARD McMAHON.

McDonald of Oregon. By Eva Emery Dye. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co. 1906. Pp. 395.)

This is the latest story of Oregon's famed author. It is one of the best. To the people of the State of Washington and of the present generation it will unquestionably be the most entertaining. It concerns their locality, their home, their country—the Washington of which we are justly so proud. It is about their fathers, their mothers, their friends of the past, and, in the cases of the older surviving pioneers, themselves. It is history, romance, poetry.

Ranald McDonald, the hero, was one of the old Hudson Bay men, his father coming before that company, and the son being born at Fort George, the first settlement on the Pacific slope north of California. A very attractive story is weaved about him, the events being located in "Old Oregon," on the ocean and in Japan. These events concern, among others, the Indians of the first half of the Nineteenth Century—Cumcumly, Seattle,